In the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 4 with the amended paragraph as follows:

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application serial no. 09/640,498, filed August 16, 2000 and entitled "Silicate-Based Sintering Aid and Method" which claims priority to U.S. provisional application serial no. 60/150,270, filed August 23, 1999, entitled "Aqueous-Based Ni-Electrode Compatible Dielectrics for Advanced Multilayer Ceramic Capacitors," and to U.S. provisional application serial no. 60/177,527, filed January 21, 2000, entitled "Aqueous-Based Ni-Electrode Compatible Dielectrics for Advanced Multilayer Ceramic Capacitors," the disclosures [both] all of which are incorporated herein by reference.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 22 with the amended paragraph as follows:

The present invention is directed to a silicate-based sintering aid and a method for producing the sintering aid. The sintering aid may be a single component silicate, such as barium silicate ($BaSiO_3$), or a multi-component silicate, such as barium-calcium silicate ($Ba_xCa_{1-x}SiO_3$, wherein $0 < x < 1$). In some embodiments, the sintering aid may be produced as nano-sized particles which can be mixed with barium titanate-based particles to form a dielectric composition. In other embodiments, the sintering aid may be produced as a coating on the surfaces of barium titanate-based particles to form a dielectric composition. The dielectric compositions that include the sintering aid, either as particles or as coatings, may be sintered at relatively low temperatures, for example, to form dielectric layers in MLCCs and, particularly, MLCCs having ultra-thin layers.